

*"However great the hardships and the trials that loom ahead, our America will endure and the cause of human freedom will triumph."*

*Cordell Hull,  
Sec. Of State under  
Franklin D. Roosevelt*

The County continues to promote a safe, healthy and prosperous environment and remains a great place to live and work. However, the County still faces many challenges. Prior to September 11, 2001, the growth of the national economy (GDP) was slowing. After the tragic events, the drop became even steeper. The uncertainty of budget implications at the State level could result in a loss of funding for counties. Eventually, there could be a negative impact on the County's economy. Therefore, it is important for the County to remain vigilant in setting policy, in being prepared and in protecting Orange County residents.

**Safety.** In keeping with one of its core businesses, public safety, the County has taken steps to protect its citizens and its assets beyond providing Sheriff services. The County of Orange is actively engaged with all of the County's cities and other Special Districts (e.g. Fire, School, Water and Sanitation Districts) in insuring that the County is well prepared to face any significant threat to life and property as a result of such events as major fires, floods, earthquakes, civil unrest and any significant event occurring at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station.



Through close coordination with Orange County's jurisdictions, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the State Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is positioned to deal with any of the above disasters.

The County has also recently increased the level of security at John Wayne Airport which has resulted in a significant increase in costs. The County will need to manage the situation and be prepared for financial impacts on its Budget and the Strategic Financial Plan.

**The State.** The State energy predicament increases costs to both businesses and residents and therefore has the potential of hindering job growth. The County Budget for Fiscal Year 2001-2002 allocates \$19 million in General Purpose Revenue for electricity and natural gas costs which is a 40% increase over last year. In addition, the pressure the energy situation places on the State budget may result in less financial support for local government. The County is closely monitoring the State's situation and is prepared to make any adjustments that are necessary to the Strategic Financial Plan.



**Senior Services.** Senior citizens represent the fastest growing population in Orange County. The growth in the senior population will require special services in areas such as transportation, delivery of medical services, senior housing, entertainment and job turnover. One of the largest concerns is the need for assisted living housing.

Assisted living units are for those seniors over seventy-five who do not need to live in a nursing home, but do need assistance with dressing, bathing, shopping etc. Assisted living units have traditionally been very expensive.

With the downturn in the economy, the number of seniors who can afford to pay for such housing has declined. The challenge now becomes to provide assisted living housing for seniors but, at affordable rates.